



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

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ONE MILLION SAN DIEGANS SUFFER FROM CHRONIC DISEASE *Healthy Diet, Exercise, and Not Smoking Can Prevent Illnesses*

One in three San Diego County residents has at least one or more chronic diseases, with treatment costing \$4.6 billion annually, according to the San Diego County Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA).

"Unfortunately too many county residents currently engage in unhealthy behaviors," said Chairwoman Pam Slater-Price, County of San Diego Board of Supervisors. "Improving our health habits will lead to improved quality of life and result in significant savings to taxpayers."

HHSA's Public Health Services analyzed the prevalence of chronic disease among San Diego County residents, as well as the cost to treat these illnesses. The analysis revealed that in 2007 nearly 11,000 people died from cancer, heart disease, diabetes, and lung disease, the four chronic diseases that caused 57 percent of the deaths in the region.

The same report showed that by 2020 the number of deaths from chronic diseases is projected to increase by 36 percent if no changes are made in risk behaviors. Another report indicated that treating people with chronic diseases in San Diego County cost \$4.6 billion in 2007, including treatment of mental health disorders. Indirect costs such as absenteeism and lost productivity, which typically are about 80 percent of total costs, were not included in this estimate. Full reports can be found at www.SDHealthStatistics.com.

"Many chronic diseases can be prevented," said Wilma Wooten, M.D., M.P.H, County Public Health Officer. "Not smoking, healthy eating and exercising are lifestyle changes that will make a difference."

To reduce the negative impact of chronic illness, the County has embarked on an initiative to improve the quality of life for County residents and communities. *The Health Strategy Agenda: Building Better Health* aims to improve the delivery of healthcare services, support healthy choices, pursue policy changes for a healthy environment, and change individual behaviors. For more information on the *Health Strategy Agenda*, visit www.sdcountry.ca.gov/hhsa.

"This 10-year plan strives to improve the health of children and adults in our communities," said Nick Macchione, HHSA Director. "Our goal is to reduce these chronic diseases that impact millions of lives now and in the future."

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